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ABSTRACT

Traditional forms of psychotherapy have dealt with helping the client change in order to better cope with society. This speech suggests that another form of psychotherapy would encourage the therapist to work to change society. The author contends that since social conditions are often the cause of psychosis, social conditions ought to be the basis for some alternative forms of psychotherapy. He proposes that therapists see themselves as agents of change in a society which is dehumanizing and distructive of self, joy and responsible satisfaction. He identifies new personality problems produced by modern society and describes the modern well-adjusted personality. He also describes an agency which he developed in which concerned individuals devote their careers just to humanizing themselves and second, to initiating projects and approaches which would direct their own disciplines toward humanizing societies and institutions. (Author/HMV)

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THE HUMANIZER

by

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To paraphrase Ecclesiastes (12:12), "Of the making of many psychotherapies, there is no end." And from where do they come? From the individual personalities of psychotherapists who can take time and money out from busy practices to think through what they are doing, rather perhaps than what the client is doing, and who can then wrest time and energy to write their books about it. And fortunately the therapists of the world are by no means homogeneous; we are a diverse lot and therefore therapies run from those which continue the quiet search for personal integrity as in the approach of Mowrer[3] to stormy tyrannies of "Rage Reduction." The former includes an earnest search for the restoration of damage to those harmed by the client; in the latter, the client is tied up and tortured by the therapist to induce expressions of rage. You will be relieved to learn further that the enthusiastic inventor of "Rage Reduction Therapy" is now defending himself in a west coast court room.

In between these two there is a kaleidoscope of colorful techniques, each sanctified by a complex theory which is at the very least, innovative,

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entirely new and creative and unrelated to any other. This is the age of individual creativity in psychotherapy -- all laws, all rules, all cautions, all conventions and taboos have been hereby suspended. And both courts of [illegible] and ethical practice committees have some hard years ahead of them while the serious therapist and the jaded society attempt some order of this chaos.

It was fashionable to attribute the particular theory and practice of the early psychotherapists to the political system of the society in which it developed. Freud was a product of the Austro-German paternalism and authoritarianism and client centered or nondirective therapy was a logical outgrowth of the American democracy. And behavior modification therapy is an outgrowth of a new acceptance of manipulation and control in the political establishment. An alternative attribution might relate the form of psychotherapy to the particular group of patients favored by the originator -- the upper middle class sexually frustrated female of Freud's principle practice and nondirective therapy being a product of the college student counseling center clientele. And the largest collection of the literature in behavior modification therapy appears to have to do with the mentally retarded.

However, with the exception, of course of those forms to be dealt with by my colleagues in this symposium and a few others, the only logical origins seem to be the personalities of the therapists. Certainly, the need systems of the clients or patients seem hardly involved. And if this be a heresy or libel, then make the most of it.

I do not mean to be harsh and insensitive to the great depths of experience and thought and on rarer occasion, research, which have gone into the modern alternatives. A kinder or even more reasoned statement would be that all of these factors have gone into the development of the alternatives, the political system which nourished or maimed the client, the personalities and the frustrations of the therapists, their neuroses, and the particular clientale which knocked upon the door. It might have been fair to say that the great diversity in clients accounts for the great diversity in therapies except for the fact that rarely does any one therapy choose to limit itself to one particular category of maladjustment.

What then should command the form and philosophy of a veridical viable alternative? The major point of my experience is that the socio-economic or surrounding social conditions seem rarely involved either in the derivation of new theories nor in the method of therapy itself. Insofar as both theoreticians and therapists accept the possibility that poverty or wealth, joy or sadness, school frustration or success, parental love or rejection, individual power or impotence in the social system, are nutrients of inferiority or of superiority, of sanity or psychosis, then these factors, the creating social conditions ought to be the basis of at least some of the new alternatives.

I should make clear at the outset I am not suggesting a discard of either the traditional therapies or the contemporary alternatives. These are rightfully directed toward the self of the patient. And in the simplest statements of responsibilities assigned to the roots of personality, both self and society must have mention. They are in a

chicken and egg relationship. Which comes first is impossible to discern. Our traditional therapies have dealt with the self in one fashion or the other. It is time now to turn to the society. I am thus suggesting, in a sense, a more responsible form of radical therapy--the therapist seeing himself as an agent of change in a society which unhappily but with creditable honesty discovered itself to be in the main dehumanizing, depersonalizing, destructive of sanity, of self, of joy and of responsible satisfaction, for great groups of its helpless and hopeless citizens. In one way or another, the traditional face-to-face, person to person, therapist to client form of talking therapy will continue; there shall always be a place for these treatment forms, including orthodox psychoanalysis, which are relentlessly addressed to the individual and to his own responsibility for his own behavior. There is no logical or psychological way out; the acknowledgement of the irresistible role of social conditions cannot free the man from the ultimate obligation to deal with and strengthen and correct his own self, his own behavior.

But if a new alternative is to be found, it will have to be directed to that latter part of that self-society mystery which until now has largely been the morose responsibility of politicians and social workers. I forsake the office and couch with more fear than reluctance. The social forces whose often malicious powers and tracks I have uncovered in the privacy of the person-to-person session, have awed me too with their damage and occasionally with their magnificence. I have been grateful to have assigned to me only the correction of their

effects rather than the dismantling and rebuilding of the force itself. But at this point in the search for man's fullness, it is impossible to look in any other direction.

The role of the therapist who has known more intimately and in more numbers than any other profession, the dehumanization which seems to be overtaking all of civilized society, demands its closure not just in the reconstruction of a damaged existence of one person, but in the revision of the structure of society itself to damage no more and more importantly to facilitate, nourish and unfold lives.

There is no other group of professionals more qualified in knowing why such forces, such structures need to be modified and probably no profession so ill-prepared to accept such a responsibility. I am suggesting that a good part of every therapist's life would be devoted to modifying the social forces which he has seen destroy his clients.

A Re-structured, or Extended View

of

"Man" or Person

There is even another propadeutic step, uniquely appropriate to the therapist before going out to joust with such social forces. We must identify the unique new personality problems of our times. We do possess the most penetrating microscope into these new forms of distress--and new forms of magnificence, which are also in part, products of the interaction of self with society. That microscope is the intense, individual therapy session.

Because of this "instrument" perhaps the most perceptive and truly human views of the nature of man, of personality theory have come from the therapists and counselors. The emergence of the new alternatives to traditional therapy, (as once did the traditional forms themselves) springs from the uncovering of new characteristics, problems and probabilities of the human. These microscopic detailings of the self painfully related in the individual counseling session reveal extended indications of the nature of the human. This is not a new human so discovered but rather, concerns continued, additional discoveries, or my more honestly, hypotheses, concerning the nature of man.

The traditional continuum of adjustment, stretches from a point hopelessly labeled as "normality", to the furthest, infinite, length

of unhappiness, bizarreness of behavior and distortion of perception a mythical point called psychoses. Midway between the two is an oasis for some and a hell for others which we term neurosis.

But the developing social conditions of perhaps the past 50 years during which this organization achieved its pleasant, stodgy middle age, have created new conditions of man, exposing new weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the individual personality to the social mileu. This new band of disorder which one locates halfway between normality and neurosis, might be described as states of "debumanization" (to avoid coining a new word!). These personality states of our times are found in their paired phases as either active or passive:

A. Those in passive phase include:

1. The Ennuist, the bored, constantly weary, uninterested, dull and dulled, unimaginative, with glazed eyes.

2. The Watcher, voyeurs of excitement, danger, anxiety or thrills who fall perhaps into three groups: (a) the Hedonic-watcher--breathless onlooker of others pleasures, including the Sexualistic-watcher or true voyeur--the classic watcher or passive onlooker at sexual adventures, (b) the pornophile--this has become a true national dehumanization, illustrated best by the fantastic early success of "I am Curious Yellow" recently "Deep Throat," and (c) the Gewaltig-watcher--the watcher of violence, blood, gore and fury.

3. The submissive personality--the repressed, self-disliking, undeveloped vocationally, or intellectually repressed by ghettos, beaurocratic agencies such as schools, and welfare agencies, frightened of assertion in any way.

B. A Group in an active phase of dehumanization

1. The Gewaltig personality--active doer of violence and participator in it for its own sake, for the "fun" of violence itself, without relationship to victim or cause.

2. The Hedonistic personality--searcher for pleasure-for its own sake, without relationship to morality or immorality, short term satisfaction seekers, non-postponers of satisfaction, "now" oriented.

3. The Sexualist, the active driven seeker of hedonistic pleasure through sexual erotic experience of all kinds, homosexual, beterosexual, preoccupation with sexual positions, etc., with little concern about their relationship to the emotional or human relationship aspects of sex.

4. The Thrill-seeker--an analogue of the passive enuuist, who seeks to destroy boredom by relentless pursuit of excitement, risk-taking and thrill seeking in all safety--or that of others, and little regard for the meaning of thrill (the Russian roulette player, the teen-age highway chicken player).

C. A separate group is perhaps represented by the term first used by Yablonsky, the "Robopath". The Robotic personality is active in a mi[illegible]ess sense—he performs acts which are more or less dictated by other people's minds. He conforms to what is expected of him, goes through the motions of enjoying what people expect him to enjoy (the cocktail party goer for example). In his work he follows orders direct or implied. He in effect plugs his body, his existence into the mind of another person or sub-society and does what is then expected of him. He receives great security but increasingly less and less inner satisfaction. He acts, but at the will of others.

I am well aware that there are some of you who will see this characterization as not a radical one but rather an extremely conservative and unpopular one. Am I endangering newly won psychological or behavioral liberties, such as the freedom from sexual repression in or society? I see these forms as a new meta-neurosis; the social, quality-of-life problems of our times which like neuroses and psychoses are survival mechanisms in a sometimes demeaning society.

The Beautiful and Noble Person

You will recall that I sketched this adjustment continuum as ranging from psychosis to normality, its more or less finite ending point. I have added this dehumanization band as meta-neurosis. However, there is a far more significant vacancy in our present theory concerning the

nature of man which underlies this continuum. It is the remainder of the adjustment continuum which stretches again into infinity, but to the right--the area of the superbly adjusted, or the superb person.

This person has been described as self-actualized, mentally healthy, fully functioning or as being in a state of high level wellness. The late Abraham Maslow[2] was perhaps the leading thinker amongst those who identified these superb people. If it may be ventured that we are to be engaged in a new therapy of societies and that there is more than myth to the possibility of a healthy society then the definition of those conditions which are the objects of the therapy, require a careful and uninhibited definition of the best products of those conditions. A nosology of successes is of greater importance in this age than a taxonomoy of failures.

I am suggesting that these personalities, these superb ones, be referred to as the "Beautiful and Noble Persons." For all of its other meanings, its distortions and its awakening of discomforting recollections to many professional people like ourselves, who ordinarily prefer Latin and Greek derivatives, the term nevertheless soon becomes quite comfortable and relevant.

In the details of this wonderland of positive human behavior, largely unexplored, perhaps because of some deep seated fears of being "too good", I foresee perhaps three principal stages whose exact character will certianly await coming researchers:

1. A self-loving person
2. An environment-loving person
3. A compassionate person

As in the dehumanization group, each of these may be seen in an active or expressive state and in a passive or receptive condition.

The self-loving person is, in his passive state, self loving, fully and passionately, self confident, self knowledgeable. He sees himself as a desirable physically or emotionally. He is, in Jourard's terms,[1] transparent in that he lets other people as well as other experiences, including experience of knowledge, easily into himself. There are few blocks to the aquistion or uses of experience for him. However, he takes in experience selectively; he chooses his movies, his newspapers, his friends, his learnings selectively in relationship to real self-development, self-enrichment.

In his active state he is expressive, gives of his self, shares his self freely with others but still in selected circumstances or situations. Thus amongst other things he chooses carefully where to invest himself, emotionally, sexually, and energetically. He actively, joyously seeks out new experiences of new learning but selectively in relationship to his needs for growth, the needs of others and in relationship to his self-discovered abilities. He enjoys his self or himself, literally. He can be alone and often is alone for meditation or for solitude and enjoys the experiences, relishes it, savors it. He delights in being in touch with himself. (This is contrasted with the aimless and often self destructive thrill seeking of the dehumanized state described earlier).

The environment-loving person describes the passionate person in relation to the physical world--to flowers, to music, to paintings, to visual images, to water, trees, buildings, streets, homes and rooms. In

his passive state, he listens to music and it fills him, he watches passively as beauty moves by, running water, people, ideas in books and stories. In his active or expressive state, he manifests a hunger for the physical world. He builds, he plants, he produces physical objects he makes things in his work, he repairs, decorates, creates beauty and a healthy environment about him. He protects his environment and enhances it, he paints, he writes music, he creates. Now not all of these things does he do, but each of these represents differing manners in which the environment loving person manifests his self in passionate relationship to the physical world. He passionately loves his environment whether it be the mountains of Montana, plains of Oklahoma or the streets of New York. He leaves his home in sadness and returns in joy. There are some who would see his passionate relationship to the physical body, as in sexual experience, as belonging at this level but I would see it more as part of the next and highest level.

The compassionate self which describes a longing, caring relationship to other persons, wives, sweethearts, children, friends. His sexual experiences are full, passionate, intensely and sensual but are shared sensualities. He is able to manifest what perhaps is the model of the compassionate existence in the shared estasy of sensual experience--that of two persons in contrast to the single personed sensuality of the drug experience or the one person orgasm of the exploitive couplings. Again his sexualities are selective but he is joyous and spontaneous, excited and unashamedly physical but it is a part of a

whole human relationship rather than sex for itself as suggested by some of the contemporary sexual therapists. But he senses and feels and knows deeply the wide range of feelings of other humans even though he has never walked in their shoes, has never had their experiences, and he is capable of doing this for people well-removed from his own ethnic or social identity.

His active phase and includes as well his being an "excitor" in his relationships with other human beings, in that he initiates group actions, or "fun" and participates spontaneously in it. Studies (Puttick[4]) show the characteristic of childlike humor as part of this personality. He is a task-facilitator, helps get jobs done, is socially facilitative, helps persons to know and care for one another and most of all is a personal growth facilitator--helps people to become themselves when he is with them. He may possess "fascination" in that he may have single or varied talents or abilities--to play the piano, to win at chess, to help another in deep emotional difficulty, to pilot an airplane. In both his active and passive phases he is a varied and multifaceted lover. He expresses deep, infinite love and compassion to many kinds of persons and does it actively in what he does with and for them--going to a dull cub scout meeting with his children, asking for a job for a friend, being with a stranger when he is in anxiety. He may love passionately, self, God, his neighborhood, his work, his city, his country, his planet, his children, his women, his men, he loves passionately and compassionately. And he may love passively too--appreciating the quiet beauty of a woman or

of a child, quietly thinking thoughts of love and kindness toward that person.

The beautiful and noble person at all levels can and should have healthy, constructive anger; he can be irate and passionate in his attack upon a social force or institution which demeans, depersonalizes or dehumanizes a fellow person. But his anger is differentiated from blind hate or destructive displays of temper. It is selective well-aimed and directed at power for constructive growth and change. He does not fly into a rage; he is outraged. His highest levels and his greatest skills are manifested in his active, meaningful, compassion for humans.

If then our society of the 70's finds itself with a new meta-neurosis and a new vision of compassion, the therapist of the 70's needs to turn to the responsible, active, therapeutic facilitation of such social evolution.

Responsible, Active, Therapeutic, Social-Growth Facilitation

In the past, this direction has implied or has been an excuse for violence. We have had sufficient experience in social and personal struggle to have long learned that violence begets aggression. This unhappy temptation to violence will probably remain with the most unwise and most ignorant and those who place their faith in zeal over knowledge and skill.

There is a radical difference in the activism of the therapist from that of the so called radical therapist; he knows the failure of immediate and rapid but shallow change and he seeks not merely orderly change but change which is rooted in substance and soundness and he

recognizes that the process is a parent of the results and cannot be inconsistent with the ends.

Society's Helpful Mythology

There are other direct parallels in society to the useful mythology which helped us develop the talking therapies--that the society itself, just as the individual, could be both good and evil--or if you will that it could only be good when it was a free or freed society. Thus one's efforts are extended not necessarily to a specific change in the social structure, such as a revision in a law concerning school attendance, but rather toward freeing a society which has become organized for a few, select people to a freedom which involves in its administration the true welfare of greater numbers of that society's constituents, whether they be welfare clients, black or just middle class citizens.

The assumption that all societies and all "establishment" structures were per se evil or rotten, which dominated the activist dogma of the sixties is replaced by the faith, the mythology, that these structures can be magnificent, and nurturant of human growth and development, once the fuller aspects of the society are freed to function.

This position implies, in retrospect not only a rejection of violence and even generally of sudden change (at least a suspicion of sudden change in the body politic) and a recognition that knowledgeable people--that is those knowledgeable in the needs of human's for social conditions which facilitate rather than maim, can aquire the skills to gradually, securely and substantially bring about the necessary changes in the social environment.

An example is the growing need for changes in attitudes toward family and divorce. The social taboo against divorce was successfully modified by a young legislator in Florida with the consultation of many psychiatrists, social workers and psychologists to one which made divorce less punitive and hostile in short "no fault". However, the judges in the state largely continued to use judgement in the hearings which reflected long years of prejudice against the male. This illustrates a positive, but sudden and less effective change which cannot last without further "therapy" on the part of those pursuing the change, that is re-education of the judges.

Involvement in modification of the social conditions which have created maladjustment can be taken at any of a number of levels, the individual, the family, the neighborhood, the work or job environment, and the region, the municipality, the state, the nation, the world. The specific conditions of the society, sometimes seem almost synonymous with the personal problems they produce at any one of these levels--the neighborhood, psychological or physical, is dreary and dull, or dirty and dangerous as described by the contemporary ghetto writers, or it can be competitive and be possessed with the other kind of dullness which characterizes much of American middle class life: the job can be dehumanizing and not just for the classic on the line factory worker but for the robotic business executive as well. Dr. Florence Halperin's devoted involvement in the day to day problems of an integrating community in Mississippi exemplifies the mature psychologist's discovery of the interaction between pollitico-social characteristics of a community and its psycho-social problems--in this case

the culturally induced feelings of inferiority in the large black population--and is an example of the alternative to talking or traditional therapies--getting in there and doing something.

After years of the usual academic word-worrying, talking and theory spinning, Sidney Jourard and I some five years ago founded for our own peace of mind, a growth center which we modestly called the Center of Man. We were unsatisfied with the usual rigidities and massive mindlessness of the university beaurocracy. We sought to evade the forces of dehumanization, the imprisonment of course structures with a plunge into the encounter group movement, except that we hoped to include in addition to the touchie-feelie philosophy, an intellectual or cognitive component. In general we were successful--it was apparent that if we wanted to make money, all we needed to do was to offer encounter groups. But as we looked over our enrollments it was painfully apparent that we were not attracting the black, the poor, nor those looking for long term betterment of self and of society. Neither growth centers nor encounter apparently were still "where its at." The Center of Man would still not die, so we branched into a new kind of clandestine agency with an equally modest title: "The International Research Center for Humanizing Studies." This was to be a group of dedicated fellows, faculty, town and students who wanted to devote their careers to humanizing themselves first, and secondly to discovering projects, and approaches which would direct their own disciplines toward the goal of humanizing societies and institutions. At various times, political scientists, theologicans, ecologists,

economists, engineers, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, educators and others joined us. We sought to humanize ourselves with discussions such as one led by Dr. Al Damico, political scientist, on the "Obligation to Disobey", another by a sociologist, Dr. Gary Spencer, on the "Dehumanizing of Hospitals."

Hearing of one instance where in a psychiatric ward, a patient was subject to extremely demeaning, depersonalizing behavior control and despite the fact that the wife of one member of the group thought the treatment a good one, and even despite the fact that the treatment seemed to restore the patient to the "outside" world, the group determined to take on the ward as a project. We invited the director of the program and others of his staff to join us in a long evening's discussion. We minced no words yet we convinced the staff of our good will and found them both shortly interested in becoming a part of our group. We have heard no more of this demeaning form of treatment

We have great ambitions. We are now about to initiate efforts to develop a program of peace studies in the University. A number of us in another group have taken part in a project to develop an attitude of compassion on the part of every single member of the county sheriff's staff, toward mental health patients picked up in dangerous circumstances by the deputies. We have responded to a request to help design a new jail around the concept of architectural openness. We joined in an angry protest against the first design submitted which would have resulted in the construction of a perfect 17th century dungeon in 20th century steel.

Some few principles of this Humanizing Psychotherapy for society are emerging.

1. The choice of effort is not necessarily determined by the injustices or indignities done by an "agency" to any one specific client. But individual therapy with the client often exposes the particular destructive social force to be targeted.
2. The therapist is wise if he teams up with similarly motivated change-agents of other disciplines, political science, economics, food sciences, etc. The psycho-social problems of the society are inextricable from economics and physical survival.

3. The rejection of violence as sowing the seeds of its own destruction. A revolution destroyes itself. An evolution blossoms and gives new fruit, year after year, century after century.

4. The ready acceptance of "demonstration" as a way to call attention to dehumanizing conditions. Demonstration is the pain and anxiety of social ills. It signals long standing underlying dehumanization.
5. Contrary to social theories, agencies, governments and institutions are neither buildings nor abstract laws but are people.

    a. These people must have a part in a truly joint effort to accomplish the evolution. Accusations, attack,

recrimination, insult, obscenity, and rage will self-destruct the therapeutic effort.

b. Beware of the social tranquilizers. Troubled waters may have deep, hidden and powerful undercurrents. Merely pouring oil on such troubled waters simply pollutes the beaches.

c. Some of the people who masquerade as institutions (schools, governments, bureaucracies) are petty tyrants, some are power collectors and some are outright thieves. But by far, most are dedicated humans on their way to becoming compassionate loving, caring, people, trying to muster their best and their society's best for lost children and alienated adults. They not only often, but usually, are at a loss, are searching for more information, new techniques to confused, exhausted, distracted, and unsure. Just like you and I are.

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